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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

5 November 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Maj. Gen. Daniel O. Graham, USA
D/DCI/IC

SUBJECT : NIE 11-8 and the BACKFIRE Bomber

1. There is obvious merit in your suggestion that particular and important military problems should receive special treatment in an estimate devoted to them, rather than being held in abeyance for one of the major annual mission-oriented estimates. This is a matter to which we should give much consideration, with the NIOs for Strategic Programs and for General Purpose Forces (who are yet to be named) playing a major role.

2. As you know, I certainly want to explore the feasibility of converting what is now known as 11-8 into a kind of notebook, individual sections of which would be frequently updated. Gen. Scowcroft, with whom I have discussed this topic informally, is certainly receptive to this line of approach as is the putative NIO for Strategic Programs. This particular approach may prove to be a blind alley, but I am sure we can improve on the 11-8 process that has evolved over the last decade.

3. With respect to the specific matter of the BACKFIRE, I am informed that last year's 11-8 gave effective treatment to the controversy. Though I know there are still differences in judgment and interpretation regarding the BACKFIRE's capabilities and mission (of which Gen. Keegan's 9 October letter is but one example), to the best of my knowledge little additional new evidence has been acquired over the past year. If this impression is correct, I think that we can let matters proceed along their present course for the next few weeks, particularly since this year's 11-8 is now well advanced and should be out, at least to the USIB, by 1 December.

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4. As soon as the Strategic Programs and General Purpose Forces NIOs are on board, I plan to sit down with them, plus the NIOs for Chinese and Soviet affairs, and take a hard, systematic look at the way military estimates are produced. We will obviously be turning to you and your colleagues for their inputs and counsel in any such exercise.

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[Redacted]
George A. Carver, Jr.
Deputy for National Intelligence Officers

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